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SUBJECT: KUWAIT SPECIAL MEDIA REACTION - SADDAM HUSSEIN
TRIAL

Ref: Kuwait 4532

Front-Page Headlines

11. Thursday, October 20, 2005

All five major newspapers carried photographs of Saddam Hussein in court on their front pages:
-- Al Qabas "Sadam before the mother of trials: I do not recognize your authority."
-- Al-Seyassah "Saddam faced justice with the delusion of a desperate despot."
-- Al-Anbaa "Public prosecution asks for Saddam's execution."
-- Al Watan "Iraq's devil before justice."
-- Al-Rai Al Aam "Saddam Hussein in the trial of the age. without an identity."

12. Friday, October 21, 2005

Only two of the five major newspapers displayed front-page coverage of the trial:
-- Al-Anbaa: A caricature of Saddam with a noose around his neck with a text balloon reading "The inevitable outcome." Headline: "Saddam asked for black hair dye prior to the trial. His request for a lawyer means recognition of the court."
-- Al-Rai Alaam: A photograph of Saddam and Al-Saadoon. Headline: "Al Sheikh Ali: Al-Saadoon issued execution orders for 221,756 Iraqis, his seating next to Saddam was intentional.. The court witnessed the mother of all farces." Article on page 22.

Coverage of the Trial

13. Thursday, October 20, 2005

-- Al-Seyassah pp. 31 and 32 headlines: "Iraq's removed despot claims innocence of his crimes and refuses to cooperate with the court"; "American documents describe Saddam as brutal and evil"; "Raghad is confident of her father's innocence"; "Those involved in Saddam's assassination attempt in Dijail did not receive outside support"; "Tehran: Saddam's crimes against Iran must be included"; "Saddam's trial is an accountability warning to other Arab leaders"; "Some Gulf newspapers considered the trial to be a unique occurrence while others thought it was a farce"; "Paris: We hope to uncover Saddam's crimes"; "Death of a man who protested the trial"
-- Al-Anbaa pp. 18 and 19 headlines: "Saddam the mouse in the hole: I do not recognize the authority of the court"; "Saddam in the cage of justice"; "American declassified documents: Saddam is a brutal, evil, crook"; "Jubilation in Kurdistan and anticipation in Tikrit."
-- Al Watan p. 26 headlines: "The despot stands before justice and refuses to recognize the court"; "After the collapse of the peacock's throne: Saddam's family members are dead or homeless."
-- Al-Rai Al Aam pp. 18 and 19 headlines: "Saddam.trial of the century"; "Saddam refuses to identify himself, claims his innocence, and reserves his constitutional rights as the president of Iraq"; "Kurdish judge heads the tribunal"; "Strict security measures for journalists and observers"; "International NGOs demand a fair trial"; "Raghad is sure of her father's innocence but is upset by the conduct of the trial"; "Newspapers celebrate the trial: Iraqis will watch their dictator stand before the mercy of justice"; "Jordan's Baath Party still sees Saddam as the legitimate president of Iraq."

14. Friday, October 21, 2005

-- Al-Anbaa pp. 14 and 15 headlines: "Public prosecutor: Saddam killed 148 people because of a rumor surrounding the assassination attempt at Al-Dijaila." "Kuwaitis see

execution as `not enough.'" "Saddam recognized the court when he requested a lawyer." "The despot asked for black hair dye before standing trial."
-- Al-Qabas front page headline: "Why the Al-Dijail trial first?"
-- Al-Seyassah p. 28 headlines: "Palestinian festival to support Saddam"; "Saddam wore a \$400 suit."
-- Al Watan p. 23: Photograph of a Palestinian boy holding up a picture of Saddam with the headline "Independent judges and an Iraq based on the sovereignty of the law."

Block Quotes

15. Friday, October 21, 2005

-- Sayar Al-Jamil wrote in pro-government Arabic daily Al-Seyassah under the title "Saddam Hussein in the cage at the criminal court": "I wish Saddam had not run and hid as he did, but rather that he had stood his ground and fought like the hero he claimed to be in the streets of Baghdad against the American tanks as they crossed the bridges over the Tigris River. Had he done so, it would have been a stance that history would have remembered for him."

-- Hamza Al-Shmaikhy also wrote for Al Seyassah, "Baathists remain": "After all the crimes, murders, mass graves, wars, and corruption, there are still people who defend the Baath Party; the same party that came to power through a coup d'etat and ruled Iraq for 35 years. Those who defend the party today wear the masks of nationalism, pan-Arabism, and Islam. They themselves have committed torture and assassinations against all that opposed them."

16. Saturday, October 22, 2005

-- Under the headline "The funny court," Ali Al-Kandry wrote in moderate Al Qabas: "This cannot be the Iraqis' best work. Technically, the courtroom's acoustics were so bad there was an echo, the microphones were not working properly, and sound was generally bad. How could Iraq with its thinkers, intellectuals, judges, and engineers produce such a disappointment? Millions watched what was supposed to be the trial of the century. Even the judge himself was inexperienced and decided that he would rather be nice and forfeit the dignity of his position. He presided over the court with no gavel and he allowed the defendants to speak without his permission. The proceedings in general were disappointingly chaotic."

-- Moderate Al-Rai Al Aam published an extremely sarcastic opinion piece by Fahd Al-Bassam, "Saddam's trial is illegitimate": "Saddam's trial lacks the legitimacy that Arabs are accustomed to--one that must be baptized by people's blood. That is why this Iraqi government lacks the bloody legitimacy to try the sedate calf Saddam Hussein who ruled `legitimately and democratically.' The principle of an eye for an eye should take precedence during this trial. Just as so many Iraqis were murdered based on suspicions, then Saddam should meet his fate as we, quite frankly, suspect him."

-- Dr. Abdullah Khalifa Al-Shayji of Al Watan wrote in "Justice and not revenge at Saddam's trial of the age": "We all want Saddam to be tried for his crimes against us. We will settle for no less than an execution. Some want it to happen in public in Al-Safah square, to watch Saddam receive the condemnation he deserves for what his killing machine did. We want the Iraqi judiciary to demonstrate its legitimacy, independence, and honesty so that the decision made will be a fair one."

-- Al Anbaa published an article by Sami Abdul Latif Al-Nesf titled, "Spotlights on Saddam's trial": "Saddam's strategy in the trial is twofold. The first is to busy the court with insignificant sideshow issues, as occurred when the attention of the court was diverted from the 143 innocent people that were murdered to the headdress of the seven criminals charged with their murder. The second is to stall; Saddam's lawyer objected to having him be tried on each charge individually and requested that he be tried on all charges at once. This would mean that the trial would drag out and take years. All Saddam needs is two years so that he can reach the age of 70 because it is said that Iraqi law does not permit the execution of those 70 years of age or older."

LEBARON